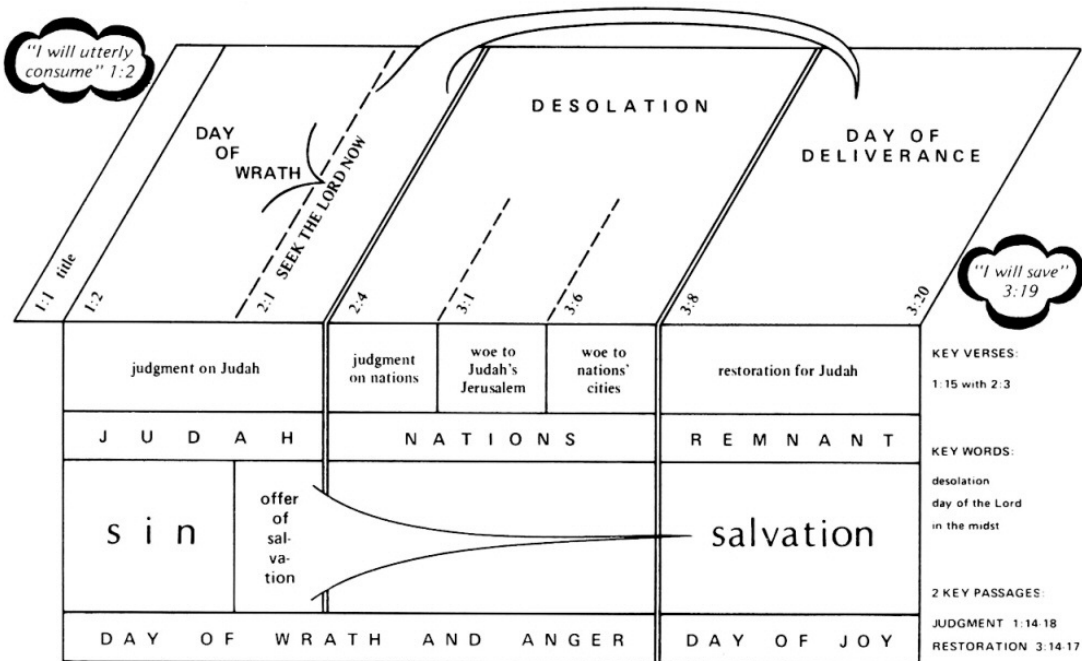


# Zephaniah 1 Commentary

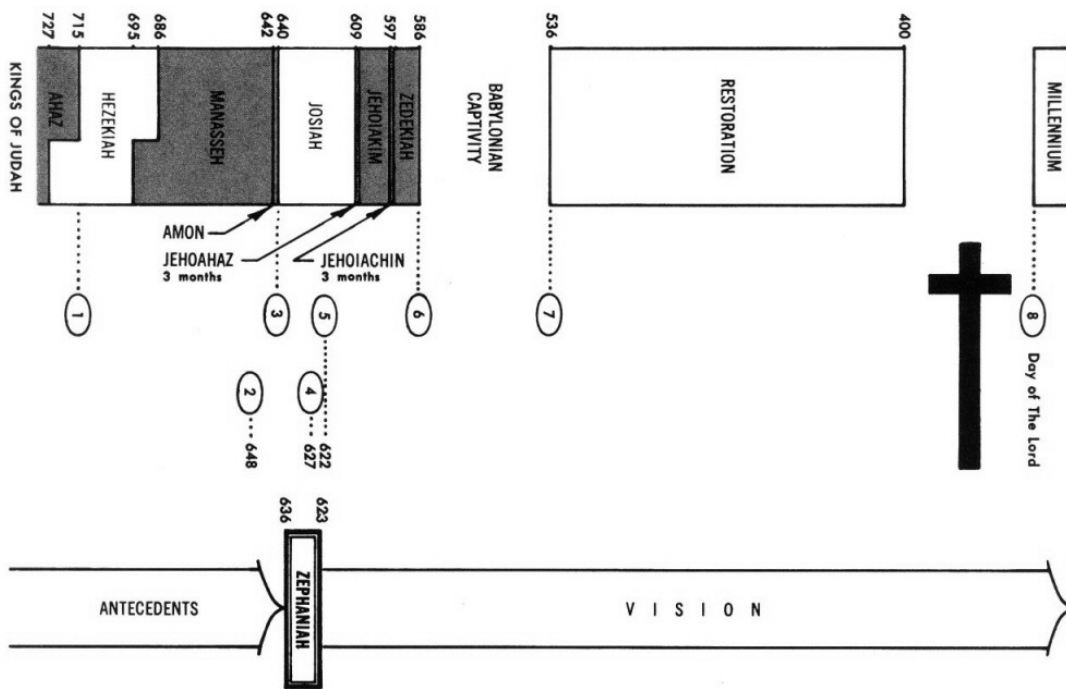
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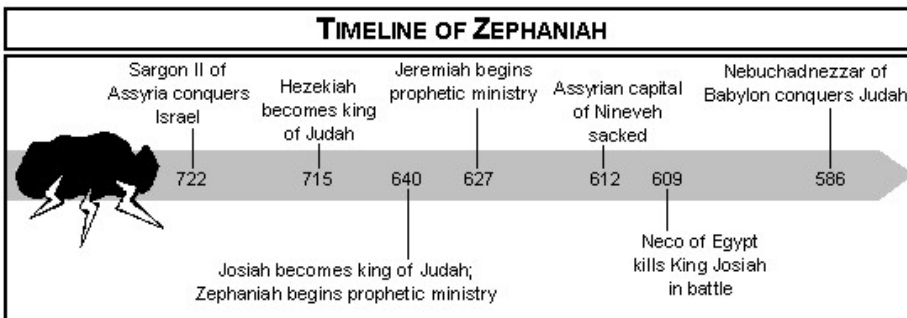
- Zephaniah 1:1
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- Zephaniah 1:16
- Zephaniah 1:17
- Zephaniah 1:18



Click chart to enlarge  
 Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[Zephaniah Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll  
[Another Zephaniah Chart](#)



SETTING OF ZEPHANIAH  
Click chart to enlarge



Source: Ryrie Study Bible



Circa 620 B.C. (Source: [ESV.org](http://ESV.org))

Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah, when Egypt, Judah, and Babylonia were eroding the power of Assyria. Shortly after this time the Babylonians would replace the Assyrians as the dominant power in the Near East. (Source: [ESV.org](http://ESV.org))

Below is a summary chart of the Zephaniah portion of the discussion of the Day of the Lord part 2

□

[Youtube discussion - What the Bible Teaches About the Day of the Lord - Part 1](#)

[Youtube discussion - What the Bible Teaches About the Day of the Lord - Part 2](#)

**Zephaniah 1:1 The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah:**

NET This is the prophetic message that the LORD gave to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah. Zephaniah delivered this message during the reign of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah:

- **word:** Ezek 1:3 Hos 1:1 2Ti 3:16 2Pe 1:19
- **in the days:** 2Ki 22:1-23:37 2Ch 34:1-35:27 Jer 1:2 25:3
- 15 page commentary on [Zephaniah from conservative source KJV Bible Commentary](#)

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Kings 22:1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.

2 Peter 1:21+ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men (LIKE ZEPHANIAH) moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

#### **Zephaniah's Prophecy ~20 Years Before the Near Fulfillment**

### **ZEPHANIAH "THE LORD HIDES"**

**The word of the LORD** - Don't miss this opening. This underscores the authority of this prophecy. It is not Zephaniah's prophecy, but Yahweh's prophecy moving by His Spirit in and through Zephaniah! Peter affirms that "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2Pe 1:21+).

***Zephaniah had royal blood of Hezekiah in his veins  
but far better he had a royal message from Yahweh on his lips!***

**Which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah:** Zephaniah lists more of his ancestry than any other prophet and it seems his great, great grandfather was good king Hezekiah ca. 715–686 b.c.). Some think that Zephaniah's preaching may even have prepared the way for the brief revival under Josiah (2Chr 34:3-7). Zephaniah's ministry corresponds to the time of King Josiah (ca. 640–609 b.c.). Judgment is the central theme of Zephaniah's message and has a near (Babylon's defeat of Judah) and a far fulfillment.

**[KJV Bible Commentary](#)** Zep 1:1b . As observed earlier (cf. Introduction), the prophet's name means "defended", "protected", or "hidden by Jehovah". This not only affords a clue to the purpose of the prophecy, as noted earlier, but also gives rise to the observation that God always calls a man who is shaped exactly as the ministry to which God calls him requires; but the ministry is infinitely larger than the man. God would use Zephaniah to deliver a very dark message of judgment through which only a few rays of hope shine. In the midst of this judgment, God would defend, protect, and hide the true remnant, so that His wrath would not fall on them and they would experience the blessings the prophet announced. This principle of matching man with mission can be observed in all the other prophets, as well as in God's ministers today....King Hezekiah was the godly king under whose reign God brought deliverance from Assyria in the days of Hosea, Micah, and Nahum almost a hundred years earlier (cf. 2Kgs 18-20; 2Chr 29-32). The mention of King Hezekiah, under whose reign a spiritual revival was experienced (cf. II Kgs 18:3-7; II Chr 29:3-19), provides a direct link with King Josiah, under whose reign a revival was about to occur (cf. II Kgs 23:30; II Chr 34-35). Thus, the two righteous kings are linked together as contrasts to the wicked Manasseh and Amon (Josiah's father), under whose reigns Israel reached a new spiritual low. These facts enable us to date Zephaniah's prophecy at 625 B.C. and cause us to realize that Zephaniah was the last prophet God sent to Judah prior to its being carried off captive into Babylon.

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**MacArthur Study Bible** - Spiritually, the reigns of Hezekiah's son Manasseh (ca. 695–642 b.c.), extending over 4 decades, and his

grandson Amon (ca. 642–640 b.c.), lasting only two years, were marked by wickedness and apostasy (2Ki 21; 2Ch 33). The early years of Josiah's reign were also characterized by the evil from his fathers (2Ki 23:4). In 622 b.c., however, while repairing the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the High-Priest found the Book of the Law (2Ki 22:8). Upon reading it, Josiah initiated extensive reforms (2Ki 23). It was during the early years of Josiah's reign, prior to the great revival, that this 11th hour prophet, Zephaniah, prophesied and no doubt had an influence on the sweeping reforms Josiah brought to the nation. But the evil kings before Josiah (55 years) had had such an effect on Judah that it never recovered. Josiah's reforms were too late and didn't outlast his life. The moral and spiritual conditions detailed in the book (cf. Zeph 1:4–6; 3:1–7) seem to place the prophecy prior to Josiah's reforms, when Judah was still languishing in idolatry and wickedness. It was in 628 b.c. that Josiah tore down all the altars to Baal, burned the bones of false prophets, and broke the carved idols (2 Chr. 34:3–7); and in 622 b.c. the Book of the Law was found (2 Chr. 34:8–35:19). Consequently, Zephaniah most likely prophesied from 635–625 b.c., and was a contemporary of Jeremiah. ([MacArthur Study Bible - Page 1294](#) borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

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**Believers Study Bible - DATE: ca. 625 B.C.** Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah (640-609 B.C.). It is certain that he wrote the prophecy before 612 B.C., for he predicted the fall of Assyria which took place at that time (cf. 2:13-15). Nevertheless, the question remains whether Zephaniah's prophecy belongs to the early or latter part of Josiah's reign. Most biblical commentators attempt to date the book in accordance with Josiah's sweeping moral and religious reform, which he instituted with the discovery of the Book of the Law in 621 B.C. (2Ki22:8ff.). No such reform is evident in the prophecy; therefore, it is maintained that the book should be dated before 621 B.C. Possibly there were two reforms attempted by Josiah (2 Chr34:3). The initial reform (c. 628 B.C.) probably lacked the zeal (IT WAS NOT BOOK OF THE LAW DRIVEN...not Word driven and fueled at least not as clearly as the "second" reform) that accompanied the second reform, thus creating the possibility that Zephaniah's prophecy may have fallen somewhere in between the two reforms. Based on the preceding considerations, the prophecy may be tentatively dated c. 625 B.C., making the prophet's ministry contemporaneous with that of Jeremiah.

Josiah's Reform (**ED: DON'T CALL IT REVIVAL...IT WAS SHORT-LIVED & JUDAH QUICKLY REVERTED TO HER EVIL WAYS**) and the Babylonian Threat: The moral state of the southern kingdom deteriorated rapidly after the reign of King Hezekiah (729-686 B.C.). The religious reforms he instituted were soon eradicated by the evil influence of Manasseh (696-642 B.C.) and Amon (642-640 B.C.; cf. 2Ki 21; 2 Chr 33).

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:** Into this scene of moral and religious degeneracy came the boy-king Josiah. Upon the discovery of the "Book of the Law" (2 Ki22:8ff.), in the eighteenth year of his reign (621 B.C.; 2Ki 22:3), Josiah launched a sweeping reform of the national order. His regime was backed by the prophetic ministries of Jeremiah and Zephaniah, but the prophets' call for repentance fell upon deaf ears. Wickedness remained unabated, and Judah was ripe for judgment. Through a quick succession of events, God's providence brought the dark and foreboding clouds of war and destruction over Judah's horizon. Assyria was being replaced by Babylon as the power beyond the Euphrates. In a futile attempt to delay Babylon's rise, Egypt under Pharaoh Necho advanced north for war; but as a means of courting Babylon's favor, Judah's forces under Josiah stood in Egypt's way. At Megiddo, Egypt trampled upon Judah, killed King Josiah, and made the nation its vassal (609 B.C.). The alliance and protection Egypt afforded were short-lived, because in 605 B.C. Babylon extinguished Egypt's aspirations at Carchemish -- a catastrophe which served to pave the way for the Chaldean conquest of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar, God's instrument of the judgment about whom Zephaniah had prophesied only two decades before, was suddenly knocking at the portals.

**THEME: Judgment: immediate fulfillment = Babylon captured Judah.** The theme of the book is the necessity of seeking the Lord in view of the coming "**day of the Lord**" (Zeph 1:7; Zeph 2:1-3)-the time of God's dire judgment upon the whole earth. The "**day of the Lord**" more often in Zephaniah than any other prophet of the Bible. In OT "the day of the Lord" refers to occasions when the Lord manifested Himself providentially in the affairs of Israel as well as in those of heathen Gentile nations (cf. Isa 13:6ff.; Jer 46:10; Eze 30:3; Joel 1:15). The New Testament expands the concept to include a future day when the Lord will ultimately return to bring universal judgment upon His foes and triumphant deliverance for His faithful remnant (1Cor 5:5; 2Cor 1:14; 1 Th 4:13-5:11). That "day" will begin with the revealing of the SON OF LAWLESSNESS (2Th 2:3, v4) who is not truly revealed until the MIDPOINT of DANIEL'S 70th WEEK (Da 9:26,27) at the inception of the GREAT TRIBULATION (note: "tribulation" is never found in Scripture as a description of the full 7 years but tradition has led to the designation of this entire 7 years as "THE TRIBULATION"...that designation to reiterate is not defended by God's Holy Word). The DAY OF THE LORD will extend to the end of the Millennium (2Pe3:10,12). Zephaniah also predicted doom of heathen nations, immediately (Nineveh fell in 612; Zeph 2:13) and future (Zeph 3:8). The book closes with a glorious description of the future Millennium which is also an aspect of the Day of the Lord.

**Zephaniah 1:2 "I will completely remove all things From the face of the earth," declares the LORD.**

NET 2 "I will destroy everything from the face of the earth," says the LORD.

- I will (KJV): etc. Heb. By taking away I will make an end, utterly. 2Ki 22:16,17 2Ch 36:21 Isa 6:11 Jer 6:8,9 24:8-10 34:22 36:29 Eze 33:27-29 Mic 7:13

#### Related Passages:

Zephaniah 3:8+ "Therefore wait for Me," declares the LORD, "For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms (**COMMENT** - cf the 6th Bowl - Rev 16:12-16+ = FIRST THE KINGS GATHER at HAR-MAGEDON, THEN Joel 3:2+ SUGGESTS THEY MOVE DOWN TO [VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT](#)), To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal.

## GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE WORLD

**I will completely remove** ([sup/suph](#); Lxx - ekleipsis = abandonment, extinction, destruction, eclipse of sun) **all things From the face of the earth," declares the LORD** - Who is this prophecy against? It is just local (Judah) or is it global (all the earth)? Clearly this prophecy of the Day of the Lord is not only given against Judah but is also against the world (global) and thus has both a near and a far fulfillment. The near fulfillment would come in about 20 years when Babylon invaded Jerusalem for the first of 3 times in 605 BC (597, 586 the other two), the time when Daniel and the 3 Hebrew friends were taken captive. Ezekiel and 10,000 Jews were taken captive in 597 BC. The Temple was demolished in 586 BC.

**Descriptive Definition of the Day of the Lord** - The DAY of the LORD describes a time when God intervenes in the "day of man." The DAY of the Lord can have a historical fulfillment (NEAR), and an eschatological fulfillment (FAR). This DAY begins with the Great Tribulation when God judges the Gentile nations and Israel, purging, purifying and refining a redeemed remnant of Israel who will enter into the Promised Land for a period of unprecedented blessing and prosperity in the Messianic Kingdom ruled by the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Day of the Lord terminates with God's "uncreation" of the creation at the end of 1000 years.

**NET NOTE** - The Hebrew text combines the infinitive absolute of אָסַף ('asaf, "gather up, sweep away") with a Hiphil prefixed first person form of אָסַף (suf, "come to an end"; see Jer 8:13 for the same combination). This can be translated literally, "Sweeping away, I will bring to an end." Some prefer to emend the text so that the infinitive and finite form of the verb are from the same root ("I will certainly sweep away," if from אָסַף [cf. NEB, NIV, NRSV]; "I will certainly bring to an end," if from אָסַף). For a discussion of proposals see J. J. M. Roberts, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah (OTL), 167, 169.

**Zephaniah 1:3 "I will remove man and beast; I will remove the birds of the sky And the fish of the sea, And the ruins along with the wicked; And I will cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.**

Legacy Standard Bible - "I will end man and beast; I will end the birds of the sky And the fish of the sea And the ruins along with the wicked; And I will cut off man from the face of the ground," declares Yahweh.

NET "I will destroy people and animals; I will destroy the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea. (The idolatrous images of these creatures will be destroyed along with evil people.) I will remove humanity from the face of the earth," says the LORD.

CSB I will sweep away man and animal; I will sweep away the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea, and the ruins along with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth. This is the LORD's declaration.

ESV "I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, and the rubble with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.

NIV "I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. The wicked will have only heaps of rubble when I cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.

NLT "I will sweep away people and animals alike. I will sweep away the birds of the sky and the fish in the sea. I will reduce the wicked to heaps of rubble, and I will wipe humanity from the face of the earth," says the

LORD.

NRS I will sweep away humans and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. I will make the wicked stumble. I will cut off humanity from the face of the earth, says the LORD.

NJB I shall sweep away humans and animals, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, I shall topple the wicked and wipe all people off the face of the earth -declares Yahweh.

NAB I will sweep away man and beast, I will sweep away the birds of the sky, and the fishes of the sea. I will overthrow the wicked; I will destroy mankind from the face of the earth, says the LORD.

YLT I consume man and beast, I consume fowl of the heavens, and fishes of the sea, And the stumbling-blocks -- the wicked, And I have cut off man from the face of the ground, An affirmation of Jehovah,

- consume man (KJV): Jer 4:23-29 12:4 Ho 4:3
- Ruins - stumblingblocks (KJV): or, idols, Isa 27:9 Eze 7:19 14:3-7 44:12 Ho 14:3,8 Mic 5:11-14 Zec 13:2 Mt 23:39 Rev 2:14
- and I (KJV): Eze 14:13-21 15:6-8

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 6:11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered, "Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people And the land is utterly desolate,

Jeremiah 4:25 (REMOVE) I looked, and behold, there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled.

Jeremiah 9:10 (REMOVE) "For the mountains I will take up a weeping and wailing, And for the pastures of the wilderness a dirge, Because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, And the lowing of the cattle is not heard; Both the birds of the sky and the beasts have fled; they are gone.

### WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF YAHWEH'S GLOBAL JUDGMENT?

**I will remove** ([sup/suph](#); Lxx - [ekleipo](#) = cease, come to an end) **man and beast; I will remove** ([sup/suph](#); Lxx - [ekleipo](#)) **the birds of the sky And the fish of the sea, And the ruins** (Heb - "stumbling blocks" - Ezek 13:3-4, 8+; Hebrew -makshelah - something overthrown, a stumbling block) **along with the wicked; And I will cut off** ([karath](#); Lxx - exairo = expel, remove, drive out as in 1Co 5:13+; cf use in Da 9:26+) **man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD- NET** on "the ruins..." translates it as "The idolatrous images of these creatures will be destroyed along with evil people." What does this divine removal remind you of? Clearly, this recalls the earth's destruction by the worldwide flood, when "man and beast" and "birds of the sky" (Ge 6:7+; Ge 7:23+) were destroyed. These are listed in exactly the opposite order of their appearance in the original creation account (cf Ge 1:20-28+) This destruction will exceed even that of the flood, (cf Ge 6:17+) since here fish will also feel the brunt of God's righteous wrath.

All creation will suffer as a result of the sin of humankind, reminding us of Paul's words in Romans 8 - "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now." (Ro 8:20-22+) As an aside, when will creation be set free from its slavery to corruption? I propose (without being dogmatic but comparing Scripture with Scripture) that this glorious redemption of all creation will be realized when the Redeemer returns and begins His 1000 year reign on His throne Jerusalem. In short, creation will be set free in the glorious component of the Day of the Lord (cf "no more curse" Zech 14:11+; see also Jesus' promise in Mt 19:28 "in the **regeneration** [[paliggenesia](#)] when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne." When is that day? The Millennium - see Zech 14:9, 17+ = "LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day". Cf Hab 2:14)!

Note the repeated verb "**remove**" and the repetition of "**I will**" the latter indicating God may be behind the scenes but is in full control of the scenes He is behind. Do you believe that is true in all the circumstance (good or bad) of your life?

**THOUGHT** - How should we respond to this truth? Hebrews 6:12+ says we should not be indifferent or "sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." So in face of the warning of a coming global catastrophe, what was Noah's pattern for us to imitate? Remember that Noah was a man of great faith (Heb 11:7+) and faith is an "active, dynamic" word. What did Noah's faith impel him to do in light of the coming global catastrophe? To build an Ark of course. But Peter gives a second response describing Noah as a "preacher of righteousness" (2Pe 2:5+). So in view of the truth that the coming Day of the Lord is near, will come suddenly on the unsuspecting lost world and will be great and terrible and will bring worldwide decimation, in imitation of the pattern of Noah, we too should strive to warn all who spiritually dead in their

trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+). We should speak the life giving, life transforming Gospel (Ro 1:16-17+) to as many souls as God's Spirit gives us opportunity (cf Eph 5:16+, "Redeem the Time" - here is a video talk I gave to a group of men 3 years ago at age 75 - [Redeem the Time](#)), so that they too might be rescued "from the wrath to come." (1Th 1:10+, cf 1Th 5:9+).

**HCSB** - To underscore the gravity of their sins and the intensity of their deserved punishment, Zephaniah used prophetic hyperbole (Jer 4:23-29; 9:9-11) in which creation itself is reversed; here the creatures are listed in reverse order from Gen 1:20-28 (sea creatures, birds, beasts, and man).

**NET NOTE** - Heb "And the stumbling blocks [or, "ruins"] with the evil"; or "the things that make the evil stumble." The line does not appear in the original form of the LXX; it may be a later scribal addition. The present translation assumes the "stumbling blocks" are idolatrous images of animals, birds, and fish. See [J. J. M. Roberts, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah \[borrow\]](#) (Old Testament Library), 167, and [Adele Berlin, Zephaniah \[borrow\]](#) (Anchor Bible Commentary), 73-74.

**Remove (05486)(sup/suph)** means to to come to an end, cease, to terminate. Purim is an annual observance whose celebration should not cease (Esther 9:28). Ps 73:19 describes how quickly the prosperity enjoyed by the wicked is brought to an end, "**swept away** by sudden terrors." Elsewhere, it is a general term that refers to the end of something as a result of God's judgment (Isa. 66:17; Jer. 8:13; Zeph. 1:2, 3).

**Sup/suph - 7x** - Est. 9:28; Ps. 73:19; Isa. 66:17; Jer. 8:13; Amos 3:15; Zeph. 1:2; Zeph. 1:3

**Cut off** (destroy) (03772) **karath** literally means to cut, to cut off or to sever an object from its source or cut into parts and implies a violent action. For example, Zipporah "cut off her son's foreskin." (Ex 4:25) or the Jews "cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes." (Nu 13:2-24, cf Dt 19:5, 20:19-20, Jdg 9:48-49, 1Sa 5:4, 17:51, 24:4-5, 11, 31:9, 2Sa 10:4, 2Sa 20:22) In another literal use as punishment to Israel for breaking the Mosaic covenant (cf Dt 29:25, 31:16), God says He will "cut down (karath) your incense altars" (Lev 26:30, cf Jdg 6:25-26, cf 1Sa 28:9). A sacrificial animal was not to be offered if it was "cut" (karath) (Lev 22:24). Karath means "chewed" (cutting food with teeth) in Nu 11:33.

**Zephaniah 1:4 "So I will stretch out My hand against Judah And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, And the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests."**

Legacy Standard Bible - "So I will stretch out My hand against Judah And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, And the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,

NET "I will attack Judah and all who live in Jerusalem. I will remove from this place every trace of Baal worship, as well as the very memory of the pagan priests.

- stretch (KJV): Ex 15:12 2Ki 21:13 Isa 14:26,27
- the remnant (KJV): "Fulfilled", 2Ki 23:4,5 2Ch 34:4

## **DIVINE JUDGMENT DIRECTED AT JUDAH**

Zephaniah 1:4-17 describe the Day of the Lord and speak of a historical (near) judgment of Judah (defeat by Babylon 586 BC) and then in Zephaniah 1:18 the description of the Day of the Lord encompasses the judgment to the entire world ("all the inhabitants of the world") which speaks of an eschatological (far) fulfillment.

**So I will stretch out My hand against Judah** This is an idiom for hostile action. **Hand** in Hebrew speaks of power. This is obviously an [anthropomorphic description](#) of God. Sometimes the Scriptures describe the "good hand of" Yahweh on someone (like Ezra in Ezra 7:9+), but this divine hand is a "heavy" hand of God's fierce wrath and righteous indignation against a Christ rejecting, rebellious creation!

**And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, And the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests** (cf 2Ki 23:5) - This was fulfilled in Judah after the Babylonian captivity. The verb **cut off** ([karath](#)) is somewhat ironically the same verb used for God cutting covenant with Abraham (Ge 15:18+) and the Mosaic Covenant (Ex 24:8+). Another notable use of karath is when Zipporah "cut off her son's foreskin." (Ex 4:25+)

Note that the judgment on Judah focuses on overt idolatry (v4-5), syncretism (v5), and total apostasy (v6). And all of these godless actions by a people who had repeated, incredible exposure to God's presence and power! What a dramatic reminder of the tremendous power of our fallen flesh which continually seeks to draw us away from our great and awesome God Who loves us with an everlasting love.

**NET NOTE** - Heb "of the pagan priests and priests." The first word (כְּמָרִים, kémarim) refers to idolatrous priests in its two other appearances in the OT (2 Kgs 23:5, Hos 10:5), while the second word (כֹּהֲנִים, kohanim) is the normal term for "priest" and is used of both legitimate and illegitimate priests in the OT. It is likely that the second term, which is omitted in the LXX, is a later scribal addition to the Hebrew text, defining the extremely rare word that precedes (see J. J. M. Roberts, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah [OTL], 167–68; cf. also NEB, NRSV). Some argue that both words are original; among the modern English versions that include both are NASB and NIV. Possibly the first word refers to outright pagan priests, while the second has in view once-legitimate priests of the Lord who had drifted into idolatrous practices. Another option is found in Adele Berlin, who translates, "the idolatrous priests among the priests," understanding the second word as giving the general category of which the idolatrous priests are a part (Zephaniah [AB 25A], 75).

**Cut off** (make [a covenant], cut off, destroy) ([03772](#)) **karath** literally means to cut, to cut off or to sever an object from its source or cut into parts and implies a violent action. Zipporah "cut off her son's foreskin." (Ex 4:25) or the Jews "cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes." (Nu 13:2-24, cf Dt 19:5, 20:19-20, Jdg 9:48-49, 1Sa 5:4, 17:51, 24:4-5, 11, 31:9, 2Sa 10:4, 2Sa 20:22) In another literal use as punishment to Israel for breaking the Mosaic covenant (cf Dt 29:25, 31:16), God says He will "cut down (karath) your incense altars" (Lev 26:30, cf Jdg 6:25-26, cf 1Sa 28:9). A sacrificial animal was not to be offered if it was "cut" (karath) (Lev 22:24). Karath means "chewed" (cutting food with teeth) in Nu 11:33.

**Zephaniah 1:5 "And those who bow down on the housetops to the host of heaven, And those who bow down and swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom,**

Legacy Standard Bible - And those who worship on the housetops the host of heaven, And those who worship and swear to Yahweh and yet swear by Milcom,

NET I will remove those who worship the stars in the sky from their rooftops, those who swear allegiance to the LORD while taking oaths in the name of their 'king,'

- worship (KJV): 2Ki 23:12 Jer 19:13 32:29
- and them (KJV): 1Ki 18:21 2Ki 17:33,41 Mt 6:24
- and that (KJV): De 10:20 Isa 48:1 Jer 4:2 Ho 4:15
- by the Lord (KJV): or, to the Lord, Isa 44:5 45:23 Ro 14:11
- swear by (KJV): Jos 23:7
- Malcham (KJV): 1Ki 11:33, Milcom, Am 5:26, Moloch

#### Related Passages:

Jeremiah 7:17-18 "Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for [the queen of heaven](#); and they pour out drink offerings to other gods in order to spite Me.

Jeremiah 8:2 "**They will spread them out to the sun, the moon and to all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served, and which they have gone after and which they have sought, and which they have worshiped.** They will not be gathered or buried; they will be as dung on the face of the ground.

Jeremiah 44:17-19; 25 "But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to [the queen of heaven](#) and pouring out drink offerings to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune. 18 "But since we stopped burning sacrifices to [the queen of heaven](#) and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have met our end by the sword and by famine." 19 "And," said the women, "when we were burning sacrifices to [the queen of heaven](#) and were pouring out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands that we made for her sacrificial cakes in her image and poured out drink offerings to her?"....(44:25) thus says the LORD of hosts,



the God of Israel, as follows: 'As for you and your wives, you have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled it with your hands, saying, "We will certainly perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn sacrifices to [the queen of heaven](#) and pour out drink offerings to her." Go ahead and confirm your vows, and certainly perform your vows!'

Jeremiah 19:13) "The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be defiled like the place Topheth, because of **all the houses on whose rooftops they burned sacrifices to all the heavenly host and poured out drink offerings to other gods.**"

Jeremiah 32:29 "The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city will enter and set this city on fire and burn it, **with the houses where people have offered incense to Baal on their roofs and poured out drink offerings to other gods to provoke Me to anger.**

2 Kings 21:3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.....21:5 For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD

2 Kings 23:5-6 He did away with the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah and in the surrounding area of Jerusalem, **also those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations and to all the host of heaven.** 6 He brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground it to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people.

## **WORSHIPPING THE CREATION RATHER THAN THE CREATOR!**

**And those who bow down on the housetops to the host of heaven** The "host of heaven" included the sun, moon, planets, and stars, all of which were deified in the ancient Near East. Flat housetops gave a clear view of the sky and allowed construction of altars for burning incense (see **Related Passages** above, especially their abominable worship of [the queen of heaven](#))

**Charles Feinberg** - This worship was called Sabeanism, and prevailed quite early in the East. Moses warned against it in Deuteronomy 4:19. Nevertheless, it was widely practiced in Israel, thus virtually making every home an idol sanctuary. (See 2 Ki 21:3, 5; 2Ki 23:5-6; Jer 7:17-18; Jer 44:17-19, 25.)

**And those who bow down and swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom** ([see note](#)) - Aka "[syncretism](#)" or "compromise worship." Milcom or Molech was a horrible idol to whom the Israelites offered their children

**HCSB** - To pledge loyalty to Milcom involved religious syncretism, combining pseudo-worship of Yahweh with worship of a false god. Here and in Jer 49:1,3, "Milcom" is spelled "Milcam" (lit "their king") in the Masoretic Text, which some interpret as a reference to Baal worship (see Zeph 1:4; cp. Jer 32; 35). Yet Milcom/Milcam was more likely the Ammonite god (Jer 49:1-3), interchangeable with "Molech" (1Ki 11:7; Jer 32:35). No consensus exists about the exact nature and spelling of this Ammonite deity; if equivalent to the Canaanite god of the underworld Molech, worship of this god apparently included child sacrifice (as in worship of Molech/Milcom; Lv 18:21; 20:2-5; 2Ki 23:10; Jer 32:35). This worship continued Manasseh's pagan practices which Josiah would disrupt (2Ki 23:10-13)

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### **QUESTION - WHO IS THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN?**

**ANSWER** - The phrase *queen of heaven* appears in two passages of the Bible, both in the book of Jeremiah. The first passage deals with the things the Israelites were doing that provoked the Lord to anger. Entire families were involved in idolatry. The children gathered wood, and the men used it to build altars to worship false gods. The women were engaged in kneading dough and baking cakes of bread for the "Queen of Heaven" (Jeremiah 7:18). This title referred to Ishtar, an Assyrian and Babylonian goddess also called [Ashtoreth](#) and Astarte by various other groups. She was thought to be the wife of the false god [Baal](#), also known as [Molech](#). The motivation of women to worship Ashtoreth stemmed from her reputation as a fertility goddess, and, as the bearing of children was greatly desired among women of that era, worship of this "queen of heaven" was rampant among pagan civilizations. Sadly, it became popular among the Israelites as well.

The second passage that refers to the queen of heaven is Jeremiah 44:17-25, where Jeremiah is giving the people the word of the Lord which God has spoken to him. He reminds the people that their disobedience and idolatry has caused the Lord to be very angry with them and to punish them with calamity. Jeremiah warns them that greater punishments await if they do not repent. They reply that they have no intentions of giving up their worship of idols, promising to continue pouring out drink offerings to the queen of

heaven, Ashtoreth, and even going so far as to credit her with the peace and prosperity they once enjoyed because of God's grace and mercy.

It is unclear where the idea that Ashtoreth was a "consort" of Yahweh originated, but it's easy to see how the blending of paganism that exalts a goddess with the worship of the true King of heaven, Yahweh, can lead to the combining of God and Ashtoreth. And since Ashtoreth worship involved sexuality (fertility rites and temple prostitution), the resulting relationship, to the depraved mind, would naturally be one of a sexual nature. Clearly, the idea of the "queen of heaven" as the consort or paramour of the King of heaven is idolatrous and unbiblical.

There is no queen of heaven. There has never been a queen of heaven. There is most certainly a King of Heaven, the Lord of hosts. He alone rules in heaven. He does not share His rule or His throne or His authority with anyone. The idea that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the queen of heaven has no scriptural basis whatsoever. Instead, the idea of Mary as the queen of heaven stems from proclamations of priests and popes of the Roman Catholic Church. While Mary was certainly a godly young woman greatly blessed in that she was chosen to bear the Savior of the world, she was not in any way divine, nor was she sinless, nor is she to be [worshiped](#), revered, venerated, or [prayed to](#). All followers of the Lord God refuse to be worshiped. Peter and the apostles refused to be worshiped (Acts 10:25–26; 14:13–14). The holy angels refuse to be worshiped (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). The response is always the same: "Worship God!" To offer worship, reverence, or veneration to anyone but God is nothing short of idolatry. Mary's own words in her "[Magnificat](#)" (Luke 1:46–55) reveal that she never thought of herself as "immaculate" or deserving of veneration; on the contrary, she was relying on the grace of God for salvation: "And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Only sinners need a savior, and Mary recognized that need in herself.

Furthermore, Jesus Himself issued a mild rebuke to a woman who cried out to Him, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you" (Luke 11:27), replying to her, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." By doing so, He curtailed any tendency to elevate Mary as an object of worship. He could certainly have said, "Yes, blessed be the Queen of Heaven!" But He did not. He was affirming the same truth that the Bible affirms—there is no queen of heaven, and the only biblical references to the "queen of heaven" refer to the goddess of an idolatrous, false religion. ([GOTQUESTIONS](#))

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Moloch/Molech/Molek?](#)

**ANSWER** - As with many details in ancient history, the exact origin of **Moloch/Molech/Molek** worship is unclear. The term *Moloch* is believed to have originated with the Phoenician *mlk*, which referred to a type of sacrifice made to confirm or acquit a vow. *Melekh* is the Hebrew word for "king." It was common for the Israelites to combine the name of pagan gods with the vowels in the Hebrew word for shame: *bosheth*. This is how the goddess of fertility and war, Astarte, became Ashtoreth. The combination of *mlk*, *melekh*, and *bosheth* results in "Moloch," which could be interpreted as "the personified ruler of shameful sacrifice." It has also been spelled *Milcom*, *Milkim*, and *Malik*. Ashtoreth was his consort, and ritual prostitution was considered an important form of worship.

The Phoenicians were a loosely gathered group of people who inhabited Canaan (modern-day Lebanon, Syria, and Israel) between 1550 BC and 300 BC. In addition to sexual rituals, Moloch worship included [child sacrifice](#), or "passing children through the fire." It is believed that idols of Moloch were giant metal statues of a man with a bull's head. Each image had a hole in the abdomen and possibly outstretched forearms that made a kind of ramp to the hole. A fire was lit in or around the statue. Babies were placed in the statue's arms or in the hole. When a couple sacrificed their firstborn, they believed that Moloch would ensure financial prosperity for the family and future children.

Moloch/Molech worship wasn't limited to Canaan. Monoliths in North Africa bear the engraving "*mlk*"—often written "*mlk'mr*" and "*mlk'dm*," which may mean "sacrifice of lamb" and "sacrifice of man." In North Africa, Moloch was renamed "Kronos." Kronos migrated to Carthage in Greece, and his mythology grew to include his becoming a Titan and the father of Zeus. Moloch is affiliated with and sometimes equated to [Ba'al](#), although the word *ba'al* was also used to designate any god or ruler.

In Genesis 12 Abraham followed God's call to move to Canaan. Although human sacrifice was not common in Abraham's native Ur, it was well-established in his new land. God later asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:2). But then God distinguished Himself from gods like Moloch. Unlike the native Canaanite gods, Abraham's God abhorred human sacrifice. God commanded Isaac to be spared, and He provided a ram to take Isaac's place (Genesis 22:13). God used this event as an illustration of how He would later provide His own Son to take our place.

Over five hundred years after Abraham, Joshua led the Israelites out of the desert to inherit the Promised Land. God knew that the Israelites were immature in their faith and easily distracted from worshiping the one true God (Exodus 32). Before the Israelites had even entered Canaan, God warned them not to participate in Moloch worship (Leviticus 18:21) and repeatedly told them to destroy those cultures that worshiped Moloch. The Israelites didn't heed God's warnings. Instead, they incorporated Moloch worship into their own traditions. Even Solomon, the wisest king, was swayed by this cult and built places of worship for Moloch and other gods

(1 Kings 11:1–8). Moloch worship occurred in the “high places” (1 Kings 12:31) as well as a narrow ravine outside Jerusalem called the Valley of Hinnom (2 Kings 23:10).

Despite occasional efforts by godly kings, worship of Moloch wasn’t abolished until the Israelites’ [captivity in Babylon](#). (Although the Babylonian religion was pantheistic and characterized by astrology and divination, it did not include human sacrifice.) Somehow, the dispersion of the Israelites into a large pagan civilization succeeded in finally purging them of their false gods. When the Jews returned to their land, they rededicated themselves to God, and the Valley of Hinnom was turned into a place for burning garbage and the bodies of executed criminals. Jesus used the imagery of this place—an eternally burning fire, consuming countless human victims—to describe hell, where those who reject God will burn for eternity (Matthew 10:28). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### QUESTION - [What is religious syncretism?](#)

**ANSWER** - [Syncretism](#), as defined by the American Heritage Dictionary, is “the reconciliation or fusion of differing systems of belief.” This is most evident in the areas of philosophy and religion, and usually results in a new teaching or belief system. Obviously, this cannot be reconciled to biblical Christianity.

Religious syncretism often takes place when foreign beliefs are introduced to an indigenous belief system and the teachings are blended. The new, heterogeneous religion then takes a shape of its own. This has been seen most clearly in Roman Catholic missionary history. Take, for example, the Roman Catholic Church’s proselytizing of animistic South America. Threatened with the fear of death, natives were baptized into the church by the tens of thousands without any preaching of the Gospel whatsoever. Former temples were razed, with Catholic shrines and chapels built on the same spot. Natives were allowed to substitute praying to saints instead of gods of water, earth and air, and replaced their former idols with new images of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, the animistic religion the natives had formerly practiced was never fully replaced—it was adapted into Catholic teachings, and this new belief system was allowed to flourish.

More recently, religious syncretism can be seen in such religious systems as the [New Age](#), [Hinduism](#), [Unitarianism](#), and [Christian Science](#). These religions are a blending of multiple different belief systems, and are continually evolving as the philosophies of mankind rise and fall in popularity.

Therein lies the problem, for syncretism relies on the whim of man, not the standard of Scripture. The Bible makes it very clear what true religion is. Think on just a few things stated in Scripture: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37); “Jesus replied, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6); “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31); and “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Religious syncretism is simply not compatible with true Christianity. In fact, any modification to biblical law and principle for the sake of a “better” religion is heresy (Revelation 22:18-19). [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### **Zephaniah 1:6 And those who have turned back from following the LORD, And those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him.”**

Legacy Standard Bible - And those who have turned back from following Yahweh, And those who have not sought Yahweh or inquired of Him.”

NET and those who turn their backs on the LORD and do not want the LORD’s help or guidance.”

- turned (KJV): 1Sa 15:11 Ps 36:3 125:5 Isa 1:4 Jer 2:13,17 3:10 15:6 Eze 3:20 Ho 4:15,16 11:7 Heb 10:38,39 2Pe 2:18-22
- and those (KJV): Ps 10:4 Ps 14:2,3 Isa 43:22 Ho 7:7 Ro 3:11 Heb 2:3

#### **Related Passages:**

1 Samuel 15:11 “I regret that I have made Saul king, for **he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.**” And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night.

Psalm 10:4 The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

Psalm 14:2; 3 The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. (14:3) They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

Isaiah 43:22 "Yet you have not called on Me, O Jacob; But you have become weary of Me, O Israel.

Hosea 7:7 All of them are hot like an oven, And they consume their rulers; All their kings have fallen. None of them calls on Me.

Romans 3:11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS **NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD**;

## **TURNING YOUR BACK ON GOD A DANGEROUS & FOOLISH MOVE!**

**And those who have turned back from following the LORD, And those who have not sought the LORD or inquired of Him-**

This is an amazing verse! Judahites had the Temple of God in their midst and presumably the manifestation of Yahweh's presence with the Shekinah Glory cloud over the Temple. And yet they turned their back on the Glorious One "and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them." (Ro 1:23-24)

**THOUGHT-** Every time we sin beloved we in effect "turn our back from following Yahweh!" Have you "turned your back on Yahweh" today? Then, enabled by the Spirit (repentance is a divine gift - Ro 2:4+), "**Repent** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) therefore and **return** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19+) **Return** to Him with your whole heart (Jer 24:7). Indeed, **return** to Him and He will **return** to you (Malachi 3:7+)! Jesus says to the busy church at Ephesus who had left their first love of Jesus "**remember** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) = we need to continually "remember" because we are so prone to forget and then to sin against Him) from where you have fallen, and **repent** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) and **do** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will **remove** your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent." (Rev 2:4,5+)

**Zephaniah 1:7 **Be silent** before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near, For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests.**

Legacy Standard Bible - Be silent before Lord Yahweh! For the day of Yahweh is near, For Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice; He has set apart His guests.

NET Be silent before the Lord GOD, for the LORD's day of judgment is almost here. The LORD has prepared a sacrificial meal; he has ritually purified his guests.

- thy (KJV): 1Sa 2:9,10 Job 40:4,5 Ps 46:10 76:8,9 Isa 6:5 Am 6:10 Hab 2:20 Zec 2:13 Ro 3:19 9:20
- for the day (KJV): Zep 1:14 Isa 2:12 13:6 Eze 7:7,10 Joe 2:1,2,11,31 Am 5:18-20 Mal 4:1 Php 4:5 2Pe 3:10-12
- for the Lord (KJV): Isa 34:6 Jer 46:10 Eze 39:17-20 Rev 19:17,18
- he hath (KJV): Pr 9:1-6 Mt 22:4 Lu 14:16,17
- bid (KJV): Heb. sanctified, or prepared, 1Sa 16:5 20:26 Col 1:12

### **Related Passages:**

Habakkuk 2:20 But the LORD is in His holy temple. **Let all the earth be silent before Him.**"

## **NO EXCUSES WHEN YAHWEH JUDGES**

**Be silent** (KJV = "**Hold thy peace**") **before the Lord GOD! For** (explains "why be silent?) **the day of the LORD is near, For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests - Why **be silent**?** The Judge of all mankind is giving His verdict and you can hear a pin drop in the courtroom (so to speak)! There seems to be a touch of sarcasm here. What does sacrifice

suggest? It is what the Jews were to be doing with a whole heart! And a sacrificial meal presupposes the slaughter of animals and here is a metaphor of the bloody judgment to come on the very ones who were not sacrificing with a whole heart to God but instead were choosing to sacrifice to idols, no gods! Oh, the stupidity and the foolishness of idolatry! The **consecrated "guests"** are the Babylonians who would be the Lord's instrument for carrying out the **sacrifice** against Judah. (cf Isa 13:3; 34:6; Jer 46:10; Eze 39:17, Rev 19:17-18)

**Charles Feinberg** quips "How galling must be the judgment when God sanctifies the heathen Babylonians as His priests to slay the sacrifices."

**NET NOTE** - The origin of the concept of "the day of the LORD" is uncertain. It may have originated in the ancient Near Eastern idea of the sovereign's day of conquest, where a king would boast that he had concluded an entire military campaign in a single day (see D. Stuart, "The Sovereign's Day of Conquest," BASOR 221 [1976]: 159-64). In the OT the expression is applied to several acts of divine judgment, some historical and others still future (see A. J. Everson, "The Days of Yahweh," JBL 93 [1974]: 329-37). In the OT the phrase first appears in Amos (assuming that Amos predates Joel and Obadiah), where it seems to refer to a belief on the part of the northern kingdom that God would intervene on Israel's behalf and judge the nation's enemies. Amos affirms that the Lord's day of judgment is indeed approaching, but he declares that it will be a day of disaster, not deliverance, for Israel. Here in Zephaniah, the "day of the Lord" includes God's coming judgment of Judah, as well as a more universal outpouring of divine anger.

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**Hampton Keathley -**

### 1). The Day of the Lord involves God's Intervention

One of the most prominent features that we learn from Zephaniah concerning the **Day of the LORD** is that God will intervene in human affairs. Zephaniah uses the word **paqad** three times (Zeph 1:8,9,12). It is translated "punish," but originally has the idea of "to visit" or "inspect in order to take appropriate action." This is not just a visit from God to dispense blind destruction or judgment. We also see that Yahweh will search Jerusalem with Lamps (Zeph 1:12). This is personal involvement by God. The message is that there will be a personal encounter with God.

Why was Zephaniah explaining all this about the Day of the Lord? Because they did not believe that God was involved in human affairs. They were **practical atheists**.

What is our response to this encounter with God? Be silent Zeph 1:7 It is a sobering thought to realize you are going to stand before the Creator. Another aspect of the Day of the Lord is the demonstration of Yahweh's unrivaled superiority. (cf. Zeph 1:2, 18) In chapter 2 the four nations represent the four points of the compass and point to God's superiority over all the nations of the world. Also cf. Zeph 2:11. If Yahweh is going to starve all the other gods then he must be superior to them. Zeph 3:8, 15. Yahweh has no equals. He will share his throne with no one.

### 2). The Day of the Lord is a day of Judgment.

In Zeph 1:3 we saw that the destruction of the earth would be worse than the flood. This time even the fish would be destroyed. This destruction is the reversal of creation. The original order was fish, birds, beasts, man. Zephaniah recounts the **de-creation**.

Although both man and beast will suffer, the emphasis is on the judgment that comes to the people. This is seen in the fact that he mentions the judgment on man twice (in vs 3) and he uses the word "cut off" in Zeph 1:3 which was used almost as a technical term for the death penalty, and he goes on to elaborate the type of judgment on specific groups of people.

Why is Yahweh bringing Judgment? Is He capricious? No, it is because they have sinned against Him (Zeph 1:17). His judgment is the response to human choices - to human sin.

One principle we can derive from this is that God deals with sin. Concerning the sins of Judah and the nations, He mentions:

<u>Judah</u>	<u>The Nations</u>
Idolatry Zeph 1:4-6	Mocking the Jews Zeph 2:8,10
Violence Zeph 1:9	Arrogance against the Jews Zeph 2:8-10
Complacency Zeph 1:12	Self sufficiency Zeph 2:15
Trusting in money Zeph 1:18	
Not trusting in God Zeph 1:6, 3:2	
Injustice Zeph 3:3-4	
Corruption Zeph 3:7	
Pride Zeph 3:11	
Deceit Zeph 1:9, 3:13	
Oppressing the poor Zeph 3:1	

## Therefore, I need to recognize that I can't get away with sin.

### 3). The Day of the Lord is also a time of Salvation

The whole book of Zephaniah builds to a crescendo with the proclamation of salvation in the final verses. The phrases "on that day" and "at that time" refer to the same day and time that he has been referring to earlier in a context of judgment. The discussion of the remnant (Zeph 2:9;3:13) and the universal worship of Yahweh (Zeph 3:9) contribute to this theme. Here we see that some of the Gentiles are included in the salvation. Yahweh rejoices when He saves but not when He judges which shows that he does not enjoy judging, but relishes saving.

*And so we see the Day of the Lord has two components,  
a day of gloom and a day of glory.*

*Which day will you choose dear reader?*

*Jesus calls for a choice, for not to choose Him is a choice!*

-- Editorial Comment

**Zephaniah 1:8 "Then it will come about on the day of the LORD'S sacrifice That I will punish the princes, the king's sons And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments.**

Legacy Standard Bible - "Then it will be on the day of Yahweh's sacrifice That I will punish the princes, the king's sons, And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments.

NET "On the day of the LORD's sacrificial meal, I will punish the princes and the king's sons, and all who wear foreign styles of clothing.

- punish (KJV): Heb. visit upon, Isa 10:12 24:21 \*margins
- the princes (KJV): 2Ki 23:30-34 24:12,13 25:6,7,19-21 Isa 39:7 Jer 22:11-19,24-30 Jer 39:6,7
- strange (KJV): De 22:5 2Ki 10:22 Isa 3:18-24

## THE LORD'S SACRIFICE OF HIS OWN PEOPLE

**Then it will come about on the day of the LORD'S sacrifice**- Not animals but humans sacrificed! The people of Judah would be the "**sacrifice!**"

**That I will punish (paqad) the princes, the king's sons And all who clothe themselves with foreign garments**- The **princes** get top billing for God's judgment! To whom much is given, much is expected and greater responsibility would incur greater judgment. **Foreign garments** indicates the chosen people who were to sanctified or separated ones are associating with and assimilating foreign customs. First, foreign gods (like Milcom) and now foreign fashion!

**Charles Feinberg** - They (**princes**) should have been leaders in righteousness instead of evil. Judgment will fall on the royal family because they followed after foreign customs and oppressed the people....Josiah the king is not included because he was to be spared the judgment because of his godly life....With foreign dress came foreign manners and worship, especially idolatry.

**THOUGHT** - Sad, what happens when you begin to drift from fellowship with God. Beware! See Backsliding

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**Punish** (number, visit) ([06485](#)) [pequddah/pāqadh/paqad](#) conveys the root idea of something that is attended to or set in order -- fighting men under an officer (2 Chr. 17:14), priests in an order (1 Chr. 23:11; 24:19); arrangement of Tabernacle (Nu 4:16[2x]). Office of one in charge of something (Ps 109:8) or officers (2 Ki. 11:18; Isa. 60:17). Usually pequddah means accounting when God attended to people's actions, usually to call them to account for their sins (Nu 16:29; Jer. 48:44). In Job 10:12 God's attention was for Job's good.

**Gilbrant** - The verb pāqadh possesses the basic meaning or "to intervene" or "to muster," "to inspect." In the Qal, it can mean "to attend to," "to pay attention to," "to care for," "to punish," "to muster," "to assemble," "to record," "to enroll," "to commit," "to appoint," "to call to account" or "to avenge." In the Niphal stem, the word can be defined as "to be missed," "to be lacking," "to be appointed" or "to be called to account." The Piel and Pual define pāqadh as "to muster" and "to be mustered," respectively. The Hiphil translates the verb as "to appoint," "to entrust" or "to commit." Essentially meaning "intervention," "division," or "duty," pequddāh occurs thirty-

two times in the OT. The noun is derived from pāqadh. In Middle Hebrew, the word means "custody." A cognate in Akkadian means "handing over" or "examination." Frequently, pequddāh refers to various positions of authority (Num. 3:32, 36; 2 Ki. 11:18; Isa. 60:17; Ezek. 44:11). For example, Eleazar was appointed as the chief leader over the Levites (Nu 3:32) and was to be in charge of the Tabernacle and everything in it (4:16). Elsewhere, the idea of punishment is indicated by pequddāh (Isa. 10:3; Jer. 8:12; 10:15; Hos. 9:7). On one occasion, God's kindness and providence in the life of Job is cited (Job 10:12). BDB 824, KB 3:958, NIDOTTE 3:657-63, Strong <H6486>, TWOT 2:731-32. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Zephaniah 1:9 "And I will punish on that day all who leap on the temple threshold, Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit."**

Legacy Standard Bible - "And I will punish on that day all who leap on the temple threshold, Who fill the house of their Lord with violence and deceit."

NET On that day I will punish all who leap over the threshold, who fill the house of their master with wealth taken by violence and deceit.

- those (KJV): Or, "that leap over the threshold," by which is probably meant the Philistines, who, after the time that Dagon fell before the ark and was broken on the threshold, leaped over it when entering his temple.
- leap (KJV): 1Sa 5:5
- which (KJV): 1Sa 2:15,16 2Ki 5:20-27 Ne 5:15 Pr 29:12 Ac 16:19

**And I will punish (paqad) on that day all who leap on the temple threshold-** What day? The Day of Yahweh. The meaning of leaping on the temple threshold is unclear. **NET NOTE** suggests "A ritual or superstition associated with the Philistine god Dagon may be in view (see 1 Sam 5:5)."

**Believers Study Bible** - "Those who leap over the threshold" (or "on the threshold"; the preposition in Hebrew can be translated either way) may be a reference to the priests and worshipers of the idol Dagon, who superstitiously abstained from treading on the temple's threshold, since it was there that the idol had fallen (see 1 Sam. 5:4, 5). More likely, however, they are servants of the rich who in their eagerness to devour "leap over thresholds" and plunder the property of others, especially of the poor.

**Who fill the house of their lord with violence and deceit-** Note that this evil is not in the streets but is literally in the presence of Yahweh. It is bold faced, brazen sin against the Holy One. This is how deeply sin will deceive you (Hebrews 3:13+)! Lightning should have fallen from Heaven but it did not because God wanted to first send a warning to His people, and Zephaniah was the man of the hour to carry out that role.

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**J Vernon McGee** - If you think that this is just the wild raving of a fundamentalist preacher, you are wrong. Let me quote an excerpt from an editorial in a major metropolitan newspaper a number of years ago. Speaking of the failure of the churches to present any spiritual message whatsoever, the editorial concluded:

This betrayal of Christ in the name of Christianity is one reason for the moral and spiritual malaise with which this country is afflicted. The melancholy fact is that the churches no longer influence the development of national character. People go to church mainly because of an impulse to participate in a service of worship, not because of any spiritual guidance they expect from the clergyman.

What a note of condemnation this is! This is true not just of our nation but of every nation. The historian Gibbon concluded that there were five reasons for the decline and fall of Rome. Gibbon was not a Christian, but here is why he says Rome fell: (1) The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society. (2) Higher and higher taxes; the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace. (3) The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting, more brutal, more immoral. (4) The building of great armaments when the great enemy was within; the decay of individual responsibility. (5) The decay of religion, fading into mere form, losing touch with life, losing power to guide the people.

The message of Zephaniah carries out this scriptural principle of human government, and he puts his finger right down on the sore spot in the southern kingdom of Judah—idolatry. Zephaniah saw what was happening. The people were now on the toboggan; they were on the way down and out, and judgment was coming. Idolatry is where every great nation has gone off the track. When a nation departs from the living and true God or when it gives up great moral principles which were based on religion, when it goes into idolatry, these factors eventually lead it into gross immorality and into political anarchy.

The interesting thing is that three kinds of idolatry, I believe, are mentioned to us here. "I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this

place.” The first form of idolatry is the worship of Baal which was introduced into the northern kingdom by Jezebel whose father was the high priest of the worship among the Sidonians. In the southern kingdom, the worship of Baal was popularized and the altars of Baal were rebuilt during the reign of Manasseh. This is an instance which illustrates why it would be wonderful to study at the same time the corresponding portions of the prophetic and historical books of Scripture. At this point it would be helpful to read the background of the reign of Manasseh (see 2 Kings 21; 2 Chron. 33). No king ever departed as far from God as this man did. He reintroduced the worship of Baal, which was a very immoral form of worship. Along with the worship of Baal was worship of Astoreth. When the female principal is introduced in deity, you have gross immorality; and that, of course, came into the life of the nation during this period. Baal worship was a form, therefore, of nature worship and was very crude indeed. When Josiah became king (he was a good king), the first thing he did was to try to remove the worship of Baal.

“And the name of the Chemarims with the priests.”—Chemarims actually means “black priests”—they wore black garments. Have you noticed that those who engage in the worship of Satan today don black garments? It is quite interesting that it is not original with them. It comes all the way down from these idolatrous priests who wore black robes. Zephaniah says that these priests are to be judged.

**Zephaniah 1:10 “On that day,” declares the LORD, “There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate, A wail from the Second Quarter, And a loud crash from the hills.**

Legacy Standard Bible - “And it will be in that day,” declares Yahweh, “That there will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate And a wail from the Second Quarter And a great destruction from the hills.

NET On that day,” says the LORD, “a loud cry will go up from the Fish Gate, wailing from the city's newer district, and a loud crash from the hills.

- in (KJV): Zep 1:7,15 Jer 39:2
- the noise (KJV): Isa 22:4,5 59:11 Jer 4:19-21,31 Am 8:3
- the fish gate (KJV): 2Ch 33:14 Ne 3:3
- the second (KJV): 2Ki 22:14 2Ch 32:22
- from (KJV): 2Sa 5:7,9 2Ch 3:1

## DESCRIPTION OF DAY OF YAHWEH IS CONTINUED

**On that day,” declares the LORD, “There will be the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate**(cf. 2 Chr 33:14; Neh 3:3; 12:39) - All parts of the city will be affected. The Fish Gate, known today as the Damascus Gate, is located on the North side and was the gate through which Nebuchadnezzar entered the city. The Fish Gate received its name from its proximity to the fish market where fish was brought from the Lake of Tiberias and the Jordan River. Note the vocalizations associated with the Day of Yahweh! Not rejoicing but “the sound of a cry,” and a “wail” (v9,10), in addition to a “loud crash (a great crashing sound).” Ponder these emotions and effects of the Day of the Lord for a moment. These have transpired in Jerusalem when they were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, but even worse they will one day occur throughout the entire world when Yahweh's wrath is fully fulfilled as described especially in Revelation 6-19.

**A wail from the Second Quarter** (2Ch 34:22) The Second Quarter was a district within the city walls. [NET NOTE](#) - This may refer to an area northwest of the temple where the rich lived.

**Charles Feinberg** - The second quarter was the second district of the city on the hill Acra, where Huldah the prophetess lived (2 Ki 22:14). Along with the crying from the fish gate and the wailing from the second quarter will be joined a crashing from the hills, Zion, Moriah, and Ophel, within the walls. The verse indicates the progress of the enemy until they occupy the prominent positions of the city.

**And a loud crash from the hills** - Meaning is uncertain but Jerusalem was built on hills so could refer to entire city.

Verses 10-11 describe the actual route the Babylonians would take as they came through Jerusalem in the invasion. Fish Gate (NW corner) > Second Quarter > Mortar (section of Jerusalem in a hollow bowl shaped area) -> The Fish Gate, opened into the northern end of the Tyrophoeon Valley (cf. 2 Chr 33:14; Neh. 3:3) just W of the Tower of Hananel & was the gate through which Nebuchadnezzar entered the city. It was given its name because of its proximity to the fish market. It was probably near the present day Damascus Gate (Neh. 3:3; 12:39). SECOND (New) QUARTER: The “Second Quarter” was so called because it had been recently added to the city. Huldah the prophetess lived there (2Ki 22:14). The New Quarter was northwest of the temple area. The



meaning of the hills is uncertain. They could refer to the whole city, or the hills (Moriah, Ophel, etc) on which Jerusalem was erected, or the hills surrounding the lower portion of the city (cf. Jer. 31:39). A cry and wailing . . . and a loud crash would go up from these areas because of the loss of lives as Nebuchadnezzar progressed through the city.

**Bible Knowledge Commentary** - To emphasize the thought that God's judgment would fall on every segment of Jewish society, Zephaniah noted that lamentations would arise from every quarter of Jerusalem (cf. the words "all who live in Jerusalem," v. 4)...A cry and wailing ... and a loud crash would go up from these areas because of the loss of lives as Nebuchadnezzar progressed through the city. (Borrow [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**Zephaniah 1:11 "Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar, For all the people of Canaan will be silenced; All who weigh out silver will be cut off."**

Legacy Standard Bible - "Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar, For all the people of Canaan will be silenced; All who weigh out silver will be cut off.

NET Wail, you who live in the market district, for all the merchants will disappear and those who count money will be removed.

- Howl (KJV): Jer 4:8 25:34 Eze 21:12 Joe 1:5,13 Zec 11:2,3 Jas 5:1
- all the (KJV): Ne 3:31,32 Ho 12:7,8 Joh 2:16 Rev 18:11-18

## THE BUSINESS DISTRICT SINGLED OUT

**Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar**, Maktesh means "mortar," a district of Jerusalem lying in a hollow and was a name applied to the Valley of Siloam from its shape and was a district where merchants carried on business. Dishonest merchants who have grown wealthy through their wicked practices are warned.

**NET NOTE** - The Hebrew term מַכְתֵּשׁ (makhtesh, "mortar") is apparently here the name of a low-lying area where economic activity took place.

**For all the people of Canaan** (you who live in the market district) **will be silenced; All who weigh out silver will be cut off**- Their "stock market" would utterly, completely crash! There is no escape except jumping out the window to one's death! One is reminded of the warning of James 5:1+ "Come now, you rich, **weep** and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you."

**NET NOTE** on "for all merchants" - Or perhaps "Canaanites." Cf. BDB 489 s.v. I and II כְּנַעֲנִי. Translators have rendered the term either as "the merchant people" (KJV, NKJV), "the traders" (NRSV), "merchants" (NEB, NIV), or, alternatively, "the people of Canaan" (NASB).

**Bible Knowledge Commentary** - In the Tyropean Valley, running north to south and separating the city east and west, the merchants plied their trade with silver and grew rich through usury. Because they took advantage of others, God would judge them and they would be ruined (Borrow [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**NET NOTE** - Heb "be cut off." In the Hebrew text of v. 11b the perfect verbal forms emphasize the certainty of the judgment, speaking of it as if it were already accomplished.

**Zephaniah 1:12 "It will come about at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And I will punish the men Who are stagnant in spirit, Who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good or evil!'"**

Legacy Standard Bible - "And it will be at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And I will punish the men Who are stagnant in spirit, Who say in their hearts, 'Yahweh will not do good or evil!'"

NET At that time I will search through Jerusalem with lamps. I will punish the people who are entrenched in their sin, those who think to themselves, 'The LORD neither rewards nor punishes.'

- that I (KJV): Jer 16:16,17 Am 9:1-3 Ob 1:6
- the men (KJV): Jer 48:11 Am 6:1 Rev 2:23

- settled (KJV): Heb. curded, or thickened
- The Lord (KJV): Job 21:15 Ps 10:11-13 14:1 94:7 Isa 5:19 Jer 10:5 Eze 8:12 9:9 Mal 3:14,15 2Pe 3:4

## GOD'S JUDGMENT SEARCHES EVERYWHERE!

**It will come about at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps-** No one would escape the punishment of the Lord (cf Amos 9:1–4). Numbers 32:23 says "you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out."

***Secret sin on earth is open scandal in Heaven!***

Josephus wrote about a later invasion in which the city's aristocracy were literally dragged from the sewer system where they hid for fear of death.

**And I will punish ([paqad](#)) the men Who are stagnant in spirit-** NET = "I will punish the people who are entrenched in their sin." Spiritual sluggishness will not receive a pass in the Day of Yahweh.

**Charles Feinberg** - The punishment will fall after such a search upon those settled on their lees, a figure which is proverbial for indifference and slothfulness (Jer 48:11). Hard crust forms on the surface of fermented liquors when they are not disturbed over a period of time. Thus settled in their carelessness, they deny God's governing providence in the universe, His activity and agency in the world, as though He brought about neither good nor calamity. For such wickedness and impudence God will bring upon them the curses of the Law: they would enjoy neither their wealth nor their houses and vineyards. (See Lev 26:32-33; Deu 28:30, 39; Amos 5:11; and Mic 6:15.)

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The phrase stagnant in spirit is literally "thick in their sediment" and derives from an expression about wine that fermented too long so that it became thick or syrupy, and thus unpalatable. It indicates men who have become spiritually stuck, unmoved, unconcerned, and unaffected by the circumstances surrounding them. These say in their hearts, even as people say today, that the LORD will not do good or evil, meaning that God does not care what people do or how they live (Dt 29:19; Jb 15:31; Ps 30:6; Is 28:15; 31:1; Jr 17:5; 23:17; Am 6:1, 3). But the Lord did care, and judgment would come so that their wealth would be plundered and they would not enjoy the homes and vineyards they had made for themselves (v. 13).

**NET NOTE** - "Heb "who thicken on their sediment." The imagery comes from wine making, where the wine, if allowed to remain on the sediment too long, will thicken into syrup. The image suggests that the people described here were complacent in their sinful behavior and interpreted the delay in judgment as divine apathy."

**Bible Knowledge Commentary** - The analogy of wine left on its dregs (NIV) suggests that the nation had become spiritually polluted. Wine allowed to ferment for a long time forms a hard crust and the liquid becomes syrupy, bitter, and unpalatable. Instead of removing the dregs of daily pollution, Judah had become hardened and indifferent to God. Zephaniah described the people's indifference and slothfulness toward God. Their indifference led them to regard God as morally indifferent. So great was her degeneration that the people did not even believe that Yahweh did as much as their self-made images. Pagan idolaters accorded their numerous deities the power of judging wrong and vindicating right. But the Jews at that time had such a low view of Yahweh that they believed He could not keep either His promises or His threats: He will do nothing, either good or bad. Their own spiritual complacency led them to think the Lord was complacent. (Borrow [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**Who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good or evil!'** - Talk about the self-deception of sin (cf "deceitfulness of sin" Heb 3:13+)! They became functional (dysfunctional) "deists" ([What is deism?](#)) thinking God is not concerned with their sin. He won't intervene in human affairs.

**THOUGHT** - When you get into sin your soul will soon be stagnated and you will act as if God doesn't care what happens and won't respond to evil. Wrong!!!! Memorize Hebrews 3:13+ and then practice it in the power of the Spirit!

**Zephaniah 1:13 "Moreover, their wealth will become plunder And their houses desolate; Yes, they will build houses but not inhabit them, And plant vineyards but not drink their wine."**

Legacy Standard Bible - "And it will be that their wealth will become spoil And their houses desolate; Indeed, they will build houses but not inhabit them, And plant vineyards but not drink their wine."

NET Their wealth will be stolen and their houses ruined! They will not live in the houses they have built, nor

will they drink the wine from the vineyards they have planted.

- their goods (KJV): Zep 1:9 Isa 6:11 24:1-3 Jer 4:7,20 5:17 9:11,19 12:10-13 Eze 7:19,21 Eze 22:31 Mic 3:12
- build (KJV): De 28:30,39,51 Isa 5:8,9 65:21,22 Am 5:11 Mic 6:15

## THERE GOES THEIR FINANCIAL PORTFOLIO!

**Moreover, their wealth will become plunder And their houses desolate** - Dt 28:30 had warned Israel if they sinned "you shall build a house, but you will not live in it." Bank account, 401K's gone, their entire portfolio plundered. The Beatles said "Money can't buy you love," but even more importantly, money can't buy you escape from experiencing the wrath of God!

**THOUGHT** - Oh how we in America in 2024 (deeply mired in abominable sins) need to pay heed to what happened to Judah, for if any nation thinks it stands, it had better take heed lest it falls! Judah failed to take heed and fell. God plays no favorites. America wake up, before our wealth is plundered! In Joel 1 the call went out first to the priests and ministers and that is surely a good pattern for our nation. Dear pastor, are you boldly proclaiming the truth (including the warnings) and calling your people to humble themselves, seeking the face of Yahweh and crying out for supernatural revival in our land.

**Yes, they will build houses but not inhabit them, And plant vineyards but not drink their wine**

**Zephaniah 1:14 Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly.**

Legacy Standard Bible - Near is the great day of Yahweh, Near and coming very quickly; O the sound, the day of Yahweh! In it the mighty man cries out bitterly.

NET The LORD's great day of judgment is almost here; it is approaching very rapidly! There will be a bitter sound on the LORD's day of judgment; at that time warriors will cry out in battle.

- great (KJV): Zep 1:7 Jer 30:7 Eze 30:3 Joe 2:1,11,31 Mal 4:5 Ac 2:20 Rev 6:17
- it is (KJV): Eze 7:6,7,12 12:23 Am 8:2 Php 4:5 Jas 5:9 2Pe 2:3
- even (KJV): Zep 1:10 Isa 22:4,5 66:6 Jer 25:36 Joe 2:11 3:16 1Th 4:16 Heb 12:26
- the mighty (KJV): Isa 15:4 33:7 Jer 48:41 Rev 6:15-17

### Related Passages:

Joel 2:11 The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?



DAY OF THE LORD  
"Darkness and Gloom"  
(Joel 2:2+)

**THE GREAT DAY  
IS NEAR, VERY NEAR**

**Near** (Zep 1:7) **is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly.** - Note that Zephaniah is crying out with a great sense of urgency, emphasizing the day is near (twice) and is coming very quickly (cf. Isa 13:6; Ezek 30:3; Joel 2:1; Joel 3:14; Ob 1:15). And he doubles down on the "**day of the LORD**," as in Amos 5:18. Zephaniah's warning was about 625 BC or about 40 years before Babylon would soon be on the doorstep of Jerusalem in 586 BC! That's how near this great and terrible was. But as in the repeated cry to the 7 churches in the Revelation, it takes spiritual ears to hear spiritual truth, and the dreadful effect of persistent, unconfessed and unrepented sin is that it progressively, gradually makes one deaf to vital spiritual truths!

**THOUGHT**- 'He who has an ear, **let him hear** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) what the Spirit says to the churches.'

**Bible Knowledge Commentary** writes "Zephaniah wrote shortly after 622 B.C., the year of Josiah's partial revival, the day of the Lord was in fact imminent. In 605, only 17 years after Josiah's revival, Judah under Jehoiakim became a vassal of Babylon and many of Judah's best young men were deported. Under Jehoiakim's equally wicked successor, Jehoiachin, the city was again besieged by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 and some 10,000 Jews were deported. Under Zedekiah the city was under a long siege by Nebuchadnezzar and was finally destroyed in the summer of 586. (For the relationship of this event to the day of the Lord see the comments under "B. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem [Zeph 1:4–2:3].") (Borrow [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**NET NOTE** - Heb "the sound of the day of the LORD, bitter [is] one crying out there, a warrior." The present translation does four things: (1) It takes מַר (mar, "bitter") with what precedes (contrary to the accentuation of the MT). (2) It understands the participle צָרַח (tsarakh, "cry out in battle") as verbal with "warrior" as its subject. (3) It takes שָׁם (sham, "there") in a temporal sense, meaning "then, at that time." (4) It understands "warrior" as collective.

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□  
[WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE DAY OF THE LORD - Part 1](#)

**Zephaniah 1:15 A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness,**

Legacy Standard Bible - A day of fury is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and thick darkness, A day of clouds and dense gloom,

NET That day will be a day of God's anger, a day of distress and hardship, a day of devastation and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and dark skies,

- is (KJV): Zep 1:18 2:2 Isa 22:5 Jer 30:7 Am 5:18-20 Lu 21:22,23 Ro 2:5 2Pe 3:7 Rev 6:17
- a day of darkness (KJV): Job 3:4-8 Joe 2:2,11

### **A DREADFUL DESCRIPTION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD**

**A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness** - If you are reading Zephaniah, slow down and ponder this awful description of the Day of Yahweh coming upon all who reject His gracious offer of forgiveness and eternal life. Let it stir your hearts for friends and relatives who do not know Jesus and let it motivate you by the Spirit to speak the truth to them in love.

Below highlighted in yellow (in the first chart) are multiple descriptions of the Day of the LORD from 4 New Testament passages and 4 Old Testament passages (other than Zephaniah).

2 Th 2:1-12	Acts 2:15-21	1Th 4:13-5:11	2Pt 3:1-13	Isaiah 13	Obadiah	Amos 5	Joel 1-3
Coming of Lord Gathering to Him  Shaken/disturbed DOL had come Events Preceding <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 1 The APOSTASY 2 Restraint removed 3 Man of Lawlessness REVEALED (S of D) 4 Opposes/exalts self over "gods" 5 Takes seat in Temple ~ "God"  (Mt 24:15, Da 9:27) His coming is in energy of Satan – power, signs, false wonders Lord slays w breath & appearance of His coming ED'ers – God sends deluding influence to believe false > to be judged bc did not believe truth loved wickedness	Pentecost Spirit → Tongues  <b>Peter's Response</b> This is that → Joel (Joel 2:28-31)  15 Men not drunk 16 Joel prophesied of this day 17-18 Last days Spirit poured out on all mankind (partially fulfilled) (TIME GAP) (Following Future) 19 Wonders in sky Signs on earth <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 20 Sun → Dark Moon → Blood Great & glorious  (cf Rev 6:12) <b>DAY OF THE LORD:</b> 21 Everyone (Jew or Gentile) who calls on the Name of the Lord (JESUS) will be saved (rescued).	<b>Context- Catching up of Believers</b>  <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 1 Like a thief in the night (surprise) (v2) 2 THEY saying peace & safety (v3) 3 Suddenly – like labor pains (v3) 4 No escape (v3)  4 Believers not in darkness 5 Sons of light 5 Sons of day SO (therefore)... 6 Be alert 6,8 Be sober (2x) 8 We have hope of salvation (rescue)  9 Believer's <b>Destiny: NOT for wrath</b>  BUT For Salvation (rescue) THEREFORE <b>11 Encourage &amp; build up ONE ANOTHER</b>	1 Stir mind of sayings of prophets & apostles 3 When? Last days 3 What? Mocking 4 Coming of Christ 4 Logic? Continues as from beginning 5-6 <b>Rebuttal?</b> Creation & flood <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 7 Heavens & earth reserved for fire 7 Day of judgment 7 Destroy ungodly 9 <b>Repentance</b> 10 Like a thief 10 Heavens pass away with a roar Elements destroy Earth/works > burn <b>DAY OF GOD</b> 12 Heavens → burn Elements → melt  11 <b>Application:</b> -Holy/godly 12 Looking → Living 13 Looking for NH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS (VERTICAL VISION)	When? 739-681bc Who? Babylon  <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 6 Wail/howl 6 Near 6 Destruction 6 From Almighty <b>Reaction to DOL?</b> 7-8 All men hands limp, hearts melt, terror, pain & anguish, writhe like labor pains, aghast, flushed <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 9 Coming, cruel, fury, burning anger, land desolate, sinners exterminated. 10 <b>Cosmic signs</b> – stars, sun, moon 11 Punish world 12 Men scarce 19 – Babylon like Sodom & Gomorrah 20 – Never inhabited, no tents	Who? Edom/Esau Why? Violence to brother Jacob  <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 15 Near for all nations 15 Pay back 16 All nations cease to exist 17 BUT - On Mt Zion escapees, 17 Mt Zion holy possessions  (Millennium) 18 -Israel like fire No survivor-Edom 19-20 – Extent of Israel's possessions 20 The Kingdom will be the LORDS (Millennium) Cf Rev 11:15 "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."	Context: 760 Northern Kingdom Israel was in time of prosperity & peace 1-A Dirge  722BC Assyria takes Israel exile = NEAR FULFILLMENT of D.O.L.  18 Foolishly longed for <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 18 Darkness, not light 18 Gloom, no brightness 19 No escape <b>Way of Escape</b> 3x- Seek the Lord that you may live (5:4, 6, 14)	<b>Addressed to:</b> Elders, inhabitants, priests (v2,13) <b>Context:</b> Locust plague  1:15 <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> Near, destruction, from the Almighty 2:1 <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 2:2 Darkness, gloom, clouds & darkness, army like dawn on mts. -Never anything like it, nor will there be after it. (cf Mt 24:21) 2:11 <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> Great & very awesome; Who can endure??? 2:12-18 Tells who can endure! (return ~repent) 2:19ff THEN – Lord zealous for Israel → will never make them a reproach among the nations (Millennium) 2:28-31 – See Acts 2 2:31 <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b> 3:1 Restore fortunes of Israel (Millennium) 3:2 God gathers nations to Valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment (See next chart)



### THE DAY OF THE LORD IN JOEL 3

**3:1-2** In those days, at that time God restores their (Israel's) fortunes & gathers nations to valley of Jehoshaphat (cf Rev 16:12-16 God gathers nations to Har-Magedon not site of battle; see Rev 19:19-21)

**3:13** Command to put in sickle and tread the wine press (of wrath of God) for it is full (see Rev 14:18-20)

**3:14** Multitudes in the Valley of decision – **The Day of the Lord** is near

**3:15** Cosmic signs – sun & moon grow dark & stars lose brightness (cf signs of Jesus' return - Mt 24:29-30)

**3:16** LORD roars from Zion, utters His voice from Jerusalem – He is a refuge and stronghold for His people (the nation of Israel)

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENIUM

**3:17** Israel will know He is their God, dwelling in Zion, His holy mountain (cf Zech 12:10, 13:8-9, Ro 11:26)

**3:17** Jerusalem will be holy (cf Obadiah 1:17, Zech 14:20-21)

**3:18** Mountains will drip sweet wine...spring will go out from the house of the LORD (cf Ezek 47:1-12)

**3:19** Egypt a waste, Edom desolate (cf Obadiah 1:10)

**3:20** Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem for all generations (cf Ezek 37:25)

**3:21** God will avenge their (Israel's) blood

Zephaniah 1:16 A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers.

Legacy Standard Bible - A day of trumpet and loud shouting Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers.

NET a day of trumpet blasts and battle cries. Judgment will fall on the fortified cities and the high corner towers.

- day (KJV): Isa 59:10 Jer 4:19,20 6:1 8:16 Ho 5:8 8:1 Am 3:6 Hab 1:6-10 Hab 3:6
- and against (KJV): Ps 48:12,13 Isa 2:12-15 32:14

## THE DAY OF YAHWEH WILL BE A DAY OF WAR

**A day of trumpet** - "a ram's horn." One purpose for trumpets was to sound an alarm (cf Joel 2:1, Joel 2:15).

**And battle cry** - The problem is that this battle is the LORD's and He never loses a battle! This will be the day of the war to end all wars. It will terminate man's futile attempts to rebel against God. The Day of the Lord will crash the curtain down on the "day of man!"

**NET NOTE on battle cries** - This description of the day of the LORD consists of an initial reference to anger, followed by four pairs of synonyms. The joining of synonyms in this way emphasizes the degree of the characteristic being described. The first two pairs focus on the distress and ruin that judgment will bring; the second two pairs picture this day of judgment as being very dark (darkness) and exceedingly overcast (gloom). The description concludes with the pairing of two familiar battle sounds, the blast on the ram's horn (trumpet blasts) and the war cries of the warriors (battle cries)

**Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers**- Men think that they can enclose themselves off from the Wrath of God...but not in the Day of the Lord. Proverbs 18:10-11+ contrast two ways to approach the Day of the Lord - "The Name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe. A rich man's wealth is his strong city, And like a high wall in his own imagination."

**Zephaniah 1:17 I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind, Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung.**

Legacy Standard Bible - I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind Because they have sinned against Yahweh; And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung.

NET I will bring distress on the people and they will stumble like blind men, for they have sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be poured out like dirt; their flesh will be scattered like manure.

- they shall (KJV): De 28:28-29 Ps 79:3 Isa 29:10 59:9,10 La 4:14 Mt 15:14 Joh 9:40,41 Ro 11:7,25 2Co 4:4 2Pe 1:9 1Jn 2:11 Rev 3:17
- because (KJV): Isa 24:5,6 50:1 59:12-15 Jer 2:17,19 4:18 La 1:8,14,18 4:13-15 La 5:16,17 Eze 22:25-31 Da 9:5-19 Mic 3:9-12 7:13
- and their blood (KJV): 2Ki 9:33-37 Ps 79:2,3 83:10 Jer 9:21,22 15:3 16:4-6 18:21 La 2:21 4:14 Am 4:10

### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 28:28-29+ **"The LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart; 29 and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness,** and you will not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you.

## THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE DAY OF THE LORD

**I will bring distress ([tsarar](#)) on men So that they will walk like the blind**- Blind men don't know where they are going. So they will be like blind men trying to find a way to escape God's wrath. All "exits" and "escape hatches" are marked "Closed by order of the Owner!" **Distress ([tsarar](#))** is translated by the Lxx with the verb ekthlibo (not found in NT) which means to squeeze much (Ge 40:11), to squeeze out which congers up the picture of men in the omnipotent hand of God as He grips them in His fierce, burning anger! Woe!

**Because they have sinned against the LORD**- Why will they experience the wrath of God? This verse is crystal clear! And remember even when we sin against another individual, ultimately we always sin against God! (cf Ge 39:9)

**And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung**- Such is the cost of rebelling against the Most High God. Sin offers momentary pleasure but never discloses the eternal cost! Dust is everywhere and has no value. So too will be men's precious blood in this fatal day. The corpses will not even be buried but will rot in the streets, their decay giving off a stench even worse than dung!

**Charles Feinberg** - As though worthless, their blood and flesh will be poured out as dust and refuse.

**Bring distress** (06887) **tsarar** means to be narrow, to be cramped, to be straitened, to be constricted, to hem or be hemmed in. Tsarar may refer to anything which is confining and in the context of Isa 8:16 it means to bind up, to tie or wrap up so as to safeguard from tampering (cf binding up in Pr 26:8, Ex 12:34, Joshua 9:4). This action refers most likely to the scribes binding the document into a sealed scroll for safekeeping. In Hos 13:12, tsarar figuratively depicts the record of Israel's sins being written down and permanently bound in a sealed scroll for safekeeping, thus assuring the that their sin would be retained. Figuratively tsarar means to oppress or harass and thus to be hostile or be an adversary or enemy, the best known use being Ps 23:5 "in the presence of my enemies (tsarar)." (Ex 23:22; Nu 10:9; 25:17-18 Esther 3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24; Ps 6:7; 7:4, 6; 8:2; 10:5; 23:5; 31:11; 42:10; 69:19; 74:4, 23; 129:1-2; 143:12; Isa 11:13; Amos 5:12).

**Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.**

Legacy Standard Bible - Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the fury of Yahweh; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete destruction, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.

NET Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's angry judgment. The whole earth will be consumed by his fiery wrath. Indeed, he will bring terrifying destruction on all who live on the earth."

- their silver (KJV): Zep 1:11 Ps 49:6-9 52:5-7 Pr 11:4 18:11 Isa 2:20,21 Jer 9:23,24 Eze 7:19 Mt 16:26 Lu 12:19-21 16:22,23
- in the day (KJV): Zep 1:15 Job 21:30
- but (KJV): Zep 3:8 Lev 26:33-35 De 29:20-28 31:17 Isa 24:1-12 Jer 4:26-29 7:20,34 9:11
- the fire (KJV): Zep 3:8 De 32:21-25 1Ki 14:22 Ps 78:58 79:5 Eze 8:3-5 16:38 Eze 36:5,6 1Co 10:22
- he shall (KJV): Zep 1:2,3 Isa 1:24

#### **Related Passages:**

Nahum 1:2 A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies.

Amos 5:19 As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him. (NO ESCAPE)

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and **they will not escape.**

### **YOU CAN BUY YOUR WAY OUT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD!**

**Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath-** Great riches cannot hold back the dam of God's wrath breaking in the Day of the Lord! The only all sufficient payment for escaping the Lord's wrath is to receive by faith the payment of Jesus Who took on Himself our sins and on Whom God's wrath against sin fell! Any other "payment plan" is useless (1Pe 1:18+).

**HCSB** - The Lord's destruction of Judah by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (Lam 2:1-3,22; 4:11) partially fulfilled this day of His burning anger (Zeph 1:18; 2:2-3) as He punished them for abominable idolatries (Zeph 1:4-11; cp. Ezek 7:8-11,14-21; 8:5-18). Ultimately all earthly inhabitants would be judged (Joel 3:1-2,12-16; Zeph 1:2-3) and consumed by His fiery anger (vv. 17-18; 3:8; cp. 2Pe 3:10-12).

**And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy-** The **day of the LORD** will impact every person on planet earth, much like the global flood and the only escape is to enter the ark of Jesus Christ by grace through faith. Hebrews 12:29 says "our God is a consuming fire" and Hebrews 10:31 adds "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

**[Believers Study Bible](#)** - God's jealousy, vengeance, and wrath are the expression of His absolute holiness and justice when faced with man's sin. If God treated sin lightly, He would not be good. God treats sin so seriously that the death of Christ was necessary for a sinner to be forgiven (cf. Ro 3:24-26).

**For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one**- It is one thing to come to the end of one's life, but Zephaniah warns that Christ rejecters will meet a terrifying end, and it will be terrifying forever and ever!

**Of all the inhabitants of the earth** - There are no "exception clauses," for the wages of sin is death so every sinner on the earth will be exterminated!

**Charles Feinberg** - God does not announce coming judgment without indicating at the same time the means of escape from the visitation. Thus we find the second chapter opening with an urgent exhortation to God's people to repent. From this call to repentance the prophet proceeds to foretell judgment on the nations surrounding Israel and especially those who have afflicted her.